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ALBERT FILOUX.

MAY BE MADE IN BIG RICHMOND

Manufacture of Airships a Coming Industry—Richmond Has Chance to Lead.

Some weeks ago the Industrial Section suggested that it was possible for Richmond to get in on the ground floor in the manufacture of airships. If I remember aright, the fact was then brought out and commented upon that a decade or two ago people laughed at the idea that the building of automobiles would ever become a big industry, or any more than a toy shop. Well, the automobile building business is now one of the biggest things in the country. Ten years from now the airship building business may be, and likely will be, an even bigger thing.

We have had here in Richmond an "aviation meet" and the airship has been pretty well advertised. True, an aviator now and then hits the grid, and in hitting it ends his earthly career. So did the first railway locomotive engineers and the first automobile navigators, but the railway locomotive came to stay, and so did the automobile. The aviator is here, and in the nature of the case he is a very fellow, and he is staying. The airship has been advertised, and it is going to stay. A few years hence the manufacture of airships, aeroplanes, or whatever name the things may be known by, will be an industry that will be worth millions to the manufacturer. The first city that gets well into the business of making airships is going to reap a great reward. This is the kind of argument that was used in the Industrial Section several weeks ago, and that argument has attracted attention.

Man Who Means Business. There was an aviation meet in this city not long since, and one of the men engaged in the business of steering ships that floated over and about Richmond at the time of the Frenchman by the name of Albert Filoux.

He is not only an aviator, but he is an experienced machinist, and his combination knowledge would most naturally enable him to make flying machines, as well as to make them after they are made. This man Filoux, set in with the aviators, and in most of the high-flying stunts that were pulled off last summer and fall in this country he was a right power. He was with Molsant in France, when he won the prize for the sailing around the State of Liberty in New York, was with him in this country, and like most people who visit Richmond, he got stuck on the town.

When Molsant and the other aviators left here for the South Filoux was left here on account of the fatal illness of his mother. While here he became acquainted with Oscar Vander Meer, a man of his own country, and Vander Meer, who has been in this city for seven years, is an inventor, and is now completing a labor-saving apparatus that will save a great deal of money in the cash. Vander Meer has got very much interested in Filoux, and gathered not only needs an idea to go upon. This inventor thinks he has, with the best of Filoux's aviation ideas, perfected the missing links in the airships of the day.

Chance for Big Industry. Filoux, before stated, took a liking to Richmond, and he thinks it a good place for the airship manufacture. With his experience as an aviator and his better experience as an airship maker, he can make a success of the business, and he has not a Bank of England behind him, and therefore some capital will be needed. Mr. Vander Meer, big in Richmond, is the first aeroplane factory that he is willing to put up 50 per cent of the money required to get the airship factory in the air, and he is willing to let Filoux, whose address is 1145 N. Eighth St., in Richmond, to help him. Vander Meer thinks an aeroplane factory in Richmond will be a success. In a note to me he said:

"In the line of heavier-than-air machines, I can guarantee to build such a device, entirely different in principle from those already in use, offering much more safety to the aeronauts, and able to carry a minimum of four passengers, or their equivalent in weight, to say, explosives, mail or merchandise. I am so convinced of the success of our enterprise that I want to control minimum 60 per cent interest in the enterprise, and, therefore, I will be willing to put up the same percentage of the required capital. In other words, we are not dreamers, but practical business men, who know perfectly well what we are doing. Richmond is not slow to catch on to a good thing, even though it may be a thing coming in the air, and if Oscar Vander Meer, whose address is Post-Office Box 675, has really a good thing, his proposed company will not lack for the necessary capital. In this room town of much money and a power of energy."

Mecklenburg County May Make a Lump Job of Good Road Building.

As has heretofore been told in the Industrial Section the good roads fever is growing in Mecklenburg county. Clarksville district has built some of the finest roads in the State by judiciously using the proceeds of a district bond issue which the people voted. Chase City district also voted a bond issue and the roads are now being built, nearly eight miles having been completed and about thirty-two more to be finished as soon as a large force of convicts and a splendid road-building outfit can do the work. People from all over the county have visited these two districts, trotted their horses over these good roads, and naturally they caught the fever, and it was intensified when they drove back home and pulled through the mud in their respective districts.

Colonel Lucius Gregory, the chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and chairman of the road board for Chase City district, and as such in charge of the work being done in that district, has written a letter to the South Hill Enterprise, which is well worth the consideration of the people, not only of Mecklenburg county, but of every county in the State that has not already anticipated and followed the good advice given. Colonel Gregory says:

"With Blunston, South Hill, Boydton and Palmers Spring districts all talking bond issue, would it not be well to have a good roads meeting for the county as a whole, and consider the matter properly before going into any more district bond issues. The present income from the general road tax is approximately \$15,000. This sum is prorated to the several districts in proportion to amounts paid by them, thus furnishing from \$700 to \$2,500 to the districts for road work. Small sum, poor work, result each year, no improvement to the roads. Nevertheless, about \$15,000 gone each year and the county benefited scarcely at all. Why not take this \$15,000 and pay the interest on \$300,000 and prorate this sum to the several districts, and let the work be done in a permanent way, which will count for something in the years to come? \$300,000 of bonds bearing 5 per cent interest to run for fifty years would probably bring a premium, no man's taxes would be increased a penny, and we would have roads which would put our good old county in the front ranks. Population would increase, neighborhood advantages multiply, churches and schools would be more accessible and improvements would begin which would make us and succeeding generations glad. If any one else thinks well of this, say so; if you know any better plan, speak out, for our interests are the same. Each district would, under the plan proposed, get her legitimate part and before the roads could all be completed the increase in taxable property would take care of the maintenance all over the county, as well as provide the sinking fund. If the plan should be well thought of, then let's have a county meeting and get things in motion looking to the issue of the \$300,000 of bonds."

Industrial Brieflets. All of Mecklenburg and a considerable part of the balance of Virginia are rejoicing to know that the election of Walter A. Post to the presidency of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, to succeed the late Calvin B. Orcutt does not necessitate his removal to New York. Mr. Post is not only president of the company, but retains his old position as general manager. A general manager must necessarily be on the spot, hence Mr. Post remains a citizen of Newport News.

At a cost of at least \$50,000 the Virginia Woolen Mills Company of Winchester has added twenty looms to its capacity, which will increase the payroll of the company not a little. The town of Kenbridge is soon to have all the gas and light it needs, a company to furnish the same having been organized. Rappahannock county has caught the good roads fever, and the money is in hand to make a first-class road from Flint Hill to the Warren county line, a distance of nearly eight miles. This will serve as an object lesson to the balance of the county. The Board of Aldermen of Thompkinsville, N. C., has voted to issue \$75,000 of bonds at present and \$50,000 more after the June session for construction of water works and a sewerage system. The French Road Manufacturing Company, of Cary, N. C., has been chartered with a capital stock of \$250,000 by F. L. Fuller and John P. Wiley, both of Durham, N. C. The Yadkin River Power Company, of Rockingham, N. C., has been chartered with a capital stock of \$1,000,000. Charles E. Johnson, of Raleigh, is the president of the company.

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